

FAA Facts

Federal Aviation Administration
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HOW DOES THAT WORK? **AIRPORT IMPROVEMENTS AND THE FAA**

In order to obtain federal assistance to preserve, enhance, or enlarge the capacity of an existing public-use airport, the public owner of the airport must apply for a grant for airport development under the FAA's Airport Improvement Program (AIP). The public owner, generally called an airport sponsor, could be a city, a county, a state, a park district, or an airport authority.

Who is Eligible for Money?

Federal grants are made available on a priority basis for planning, development, and noise compatibility projects at public-use airports included in the FAA's National Plan of Integrated Airport System.

Eligible development projects may include facilities and equipment associated with the construction, improvement, or repair (excluding routine maintenance) of an airport. Some typical work items are land acquisition, site preparation, construction, alteration and repair of runways, taxiways, aprons, and roads within airport boundaries, installation of airport lighting and navigational aids, or aircraft terminal development. Security/safety-related equipment also is eligible at commercial service airports when required by regulation.

To be eligible for a grant, an airport must be included in the National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems (NPIAS). The NPIAS, which is prepared and published every two years, identifies public-use airports considered to provide a safe, efficient, and integrated system of airports to meet the needs of civil aviation, national defense, and the U.S. Postal Service.

Documentation

Prior to submitting an application for an AIP grant, the following documents should be completed.

Airport Capital Improvement Plan: The FAA encourages sponsors to maintain a comprehensive Airport Capital Improvement Plan (ACIP) which provides the FAA with an understanding of the airport's capital needs. The ACIP must include a description of work items; identify the scope of projects; explain justifications and the benefits expected; and include total cost estimates.

Airport Layout Plan: In connection with the project for airport development, the proposed work must be shown on an Airport Layout Plan (ALP) that has been approved by the FAA. The Airport Layout Plan (ALP) depicts existing and future facilities and boundaries of the airport through very detailed drawings.

Environmental Assessment: An Environmental Assessment (EA) includes the sponsor's evaluation of aviation need for the airport improvements, the environmental impacts of the improvements, and an assessment of environmental mitigation measures.

Public Hearings: In addition, if the proposed project involves the relocation of an airport, an airport runway, or a major runway extension, the sponsor must offer the opportunity for a public hearing for the purpose of considering the economic, social, and environmental affects of the proposal and its consistency with the goals and objectives of the community's growth and zoning plans.

Applying for Funds

The sponsor submits the AIP grant application when the documentation is in place and when the project costs have been established based on firm contract prices or appraisals.

The FAA reviews the application and if satisfactory, issues a grant offer to the sponsor. The grant agreement sets forth a mutual understanding of the work to be accomplished, and the maximum obligation of the United States. The sponsor is responsible for paying all project costs that exceed the maximum obligation. The acceptance of the offer by the sponsor completes the grant agreement and becomes a legal binding contract between the sponsor and the United States.

In addition, the sponsor is responsible for monitoring performance under the project to ensure the approved work items are being accomplished without undue delay in accordance with the grant agreement. The FAA may periodically review and inspect project progress.

The Airport's Obligations

In accepting federal assistance, the sponsor incurs obligations, which continue after the project is financially complete. The obligations include:

- keeping the airport available for public use on fair and reasonable terms;
- not granting an exclusive right to any persons providing aeronautical services to the public;
- suitably operating and maintaining the airport;
- taking appropriate action, to the extent reasonable, to achieve compatible uses of lands in the vicinity of the airport;
- using all airport revenue for airport purposes;
- providing an annual report listing airport revenues and expenditures;
- assuring that no person is excluded from participating in any activity conducted with or benefiting from grant funds on the grounds of race, creed, color, national origin, sex, age, or handicap; and
- submitting annual or special financial and operations reports as the Secretary of Transportation may request, as well as making any records available for the Secretary's inspection.